

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1164
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, PN
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON NEGOTIATIONS

REF: A. PANAMA 1962; B. PANAMA 2002

SUMMARY: CONFUSION SINED EXASPERATION IN MARCH 19-21 LOCAL PRESS COMMENT ON THE CANAL NEGOTIATIONS. U.S. PRESS REPORTS ALLEGING THAT AMBASSADOR LINOWITZ HAD SPOKEN OF "PERPETUITY" IN CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS LAST WEDNESDAY PRODUCED SHOCK. AMBASSADOR JORDEN'S STATEMENT LAST FRIDAY THAT THE WORD "PERPETUITY" HAD BEEN TAKEN OUT OF CONTEXT HELPED MATTERS, BUT CONFUSION OVER WHAT WAS SAID AND WHAT IT ALL MEANS HAS CONTINUED. DESPITE THE TART EDITORIAL COMMENTS ON "ZIG-ZAGGING" AND "FORMLESS" U.S. POLICY, PANAMANIAN OFFICIAL REACTION TO THE AFFAIR HAS BEEN MILD. END SUMMARY.

1. SATURDAY, MARCH 19 "MATUTINO" EDITORIAL REFLECTED THE CONTRETEMPS PRODUCED BY PRESS REPORTS OF AMB. LINOWITZ' ALLEGED REMARKS AT CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS ON MARCH 16. ENTITLED "ZIG-ZAG DIPLOMACY", THE EDITORIAL QUERIED
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HOW THE U.S. COULD EXPECT TO MERIT ANY CONFIDENCE AT ALL IF IT SHOWED SO LITTLE RESPECT FOR TREATIES AND AGREEMENTS (I.E. 8 POINTS) AS USE OF "PERPETUITY" BY A CO-NEGOTIATOR WOULD IMPLY. COLUMNIST LUIS RESTREPO CALLED AMB. LINOWITZ A "FALSE APOSTLE." "CRITICA'S" EDITORIALIST WAS UNSURE WHY AMB. LINOWITZ SAID WHAT HE WAS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID, BUT LAMENTED THAT HE

SAID IT FOR WHATEVER REASON. EDITORIAL REAFFIRMED ITS SUPPORT FOR GENERAL TORRIJOS' RESTATEMENT OF PANAMA'S "INVARIABLE POSITION" VIS-A-VIS THE NEGOTIATIONS.

2. SUNDAY'S "ESTRELLA" FRONT-PAGED AN AP ARTICLE WHICH FOCUSSED ON GENERAL TORRIJOS' PRESS INTERVIEW (PANAMA 2002), BUT IN ADDITION INCLUDED AMB. JORDEN'S STATEMENT ON THE MISQUOTATION. (THE ARTICLE ALSO SAID THAT "EMBASSY OFFICIALS" CONTRADICTED THE AMBASSADOR'S CLARIFICATION. WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT IS REFERRED TO HERE.) SUNDAY "DOMINICAL" EDITORIAL DENOUNCED THE "VAST CAMPAIGN OF DISTORTION" WAGED AGAINST THE PANAMANIAN POSITION BY THE U.S. AND THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS AGENCIES. IF, EDITORIAL CONTINUED, U.S. WISHES TO TAKE THE MORAL HIGH GROUND IN WORLD AFFAIRS THEN IT NEED TO DEAL JUSTLY -- AND SWIFTLY -- WITH PANAMA'S CANAL ASPIRATIONS.

3. MONDAY'S ERSA PRESS CONTINUED THE WEEKEND THEMES. "MATUTINO'S" EDITORIAL CALLED ON U.S. TO "DEFINE ITSELF." CRITICIZING APPARENT FICKLENESS IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY, IT ADDED THAT CONFUSING STATEMENTS ON THE NEGOTIATIONS MIGHT BE DESIGNED TO DISORIENT PANAMA'S NEGOTIATORS. REFERRING TO AMBS. BUNKER AND LINOQITZ' "GOOD WILL" TRIP TO CARACAS, THE EDITORIAL WONDERED HOW GOOD WOULD BE THEIR, AND THE UNITED STATES', WILL. "CRITICA" ASSERTED THAT U.S. NEGOTIATORS SHOULD HEED TORRIJOS' ADVICE, COME WITH PRECISE INSTRUCTIONS TO NEGOTIATE, AND BY NEGOTIATING FAIRLY "REASSUME A WORLD LEADERSHIP BASED ON A SOLID PRECEPT OF POLITICAL MORALITY." IN OTHER WORDS, DEEDS NOT WORDS.

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4. COMMENT:DESPITE THE WELTER OF ALLEGATIONS, CLARIFICATIONS, RCRTICISMS AND LAMENTS ONE THING IS CLEAR: THE GOP REACION TO THE NEWS REPORTS OF AMB. LINOWITZ' TESTIMONY ON THE HILL (REPORTED REFTTEL) HAS BEEN MILD. IN 1975 A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR REMARK BY SECRETARY KISSINGER (ALSO TAKEN OUT OF CONTEXT) GAVE RISE TO TANGIBLE RATHER THAN VERBAL ROCK-THROWING. JORDEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, INTERNATIONAL CANALS, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 22-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
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From: PANAMA
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